

For All Your Days

by Nathaniel Lent

Category: RWBY

Genre: Adventure, Romance

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2016-04-08 05:29:46

Updated: 2016-04-18 23:47:14

Packaged: 2016-04-27 22:01:05

Rating: M

Chapters: 4

Words: 12,599

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: It's been 2 years since RWBY left their legacy behind at Beacon. 2 Years since Weiss assumed her position as the CEO of the SDC. 2 years since Blake and Yang started their careers as huntresses... and 2 years since their Little Red had gone missing.

1. Chapter 1

Chapter 1

Weiss Schnee was annoyed.

The heiress, now CEO, had somewhat mellowed out since her days at Beacon Academy, something that had come with growing up. Seldom did she lose her temper over the small things that she had in the past, and gone were the tantrums that had pervaded her everyday life. That said, there were only a few people on Remnant who could dare to cross the woman in this state, and even fewer who would willingly do so.

Standing up, the white-haired woman paced her office, letting out small huffs all the while. Her office was comfortable, if conservative. White carpet, white walls, wooden shelves, and a line of windows that ran the length of the office formed the foundation. A television laid across from the desk which housed several holographic screens. Speaking of which, the cause of her frustrations could be traced to the pile of documents currently on her desk; all of which depicted blurry photos of a figure cloaked in black and red.

Ruby. Fucking. Rose.

The leader of her four years at Beacon had wedged herself into the icy woman's heart with her insufferable cheerfulness and impossibly endearing honesty. Four years of sleeping in the same room and fighting life and death battles had left a trust in the red and white partners that few could ever replicate. It was also for this reason

that Weiss was currently so irate.

Ruby was, in short, missing. Missing for the past 2 years now. As soon as their team of 4 had graduated from Beacon, the youngest and ironically, most skilled, member of their team had left on a long-term mission with her uncle. Now, this had all been well and good, with the two keeping in constant contact, if sometimes looking slightly worse for wear. The problem came when Qrow had returned after 2 months, and his niece was still nowhere to be found.

The only reason that the WBW portion of team RWBY hadn't immediately upended the world in an attempt to find their leader was the word of the only person who had seen Ruby before her sudden disappearance, her uncle Qrow. And as much as they were worried that their all too trusting leader was in over her pretty little head, Qrow had, for quite awhile now, been assuring them otherwise.

Of course, there was no way that the team had given up that easily. Yang and Blake had been on a lookout for their leader wherever they took a mission. To Vale, Atlas, Mistral, and Vacuo, they had gone around the globe; and though you would think a girl with a giant scythe, black-red hair, and a red cloak would be rather memorable, there was no trace of the younger crimsonette. Their consolation at least, was that they were at least out there looking, searching for any sign of Ruby.

Weiss on the other hand, was denied even that, stuck in her own office and saddled with the running of the Schnee Dust Company. While the CEO position was something that she had been expected to do, it had been on no uncertain terms that it would be the product of her father's wishes. Though it had involved several compromises, namely Weiss' agreement to deal with the suitors that her father wished her to meet, the then young heiress had managed to have her father pass control of the company to her. Of course, no small amount of support from Winter had played a large part in their father's decision. No matter how powerful the SDC was economically, even the gargantuan dust monopoly had to pay some heed to the Atlesian military. Thusly, Weiss now held authority over the largest economic power on Remnant.

This, in turn, led to the young woman's current situation. Had it not been for her position, Weiss would have long since been out the proverbial door searching for her missing partner. Running a hand through her hair as she slumped into the admittedly comfortable chair that adorned her office, Weiss once again ran through the reports that sat on her desk. Most of them were false leads or cold trails, information that had already been looked through and deemed useless, weeks or even months old images that came in by mail. It was an arduous process, one that Weiss nevertheless continued.

Scouring the papers for any possible source of reliable information concerning Ruby, Weiss almost didn't notice the quiet knock that signaled someone's presence on the other side of the door.

At this time? It could only be one person.

"The door isn't locked, come in." she called out. The door slowly opened to reveal another young woman, slightly older than Weiss, that seemed to be a mirror image in all but the strict military discipline that had been instilled in her.

Giving a faint smile, Weiss greeted the visitor with nary a second thought. "Specialist Winter Schnee, to what do I owe this pleasure?" Though there was no need to be so formal with her sister, Weiss always found it comforting to find something so small to indulge the older woman with the formality that the latter was always so fond of.

"Well Miss Schnee, I didn't realize that I needed an excuse to visit my own sister." Responding in kind with her own slight smirk, Winter caught on quickly.

"Oh of course, I'm only too happy to see you here." She gestured to the chair across from her. "Why not take a seat? There's coffee or tea if you wouldn't mind waiting a few minutes." Weiss needed a break from her endless search that only seemed to bring up more questions instead of answers.

Unfortunately, it seemed as if Winter had other plans. Though she did take a seat, the previously amicable expression turned into one that she wore when in meetings, something that had Weiss adopt a similar attitude.

"Unfortunately, our time for formalities is at an end Weiss." Though it was a minute detail, Weiss gave a small cheer inside of her at the sound of her sister addressing her by name. For years it had simply been, "sister." There was little time to dwell on this however.

"What happened? An attack? White Fang activity is at an all time low Winter." Assumptions make a fool out of you and me. Weiss knew this well enough; but when Winter Schnee came to you with what she clearly regarded as a serious issue, it was best to be safe rather than sorry.

"Luckily no, there hasn't been any trouble for a month now, best that it stays that way." Winter produced a single folded up sheet of paper from her breast pocket and handed it to Weiss. "What I have is, fortunately, of a much more positive subject, though just as serious."

Unfolding the sheet slowly, Weiss stared at the sheet in front of her, eyes scanning for anything that might have brought her sister rushing to her office. For all intents and purposes, it seemed to beâ€¦|

"Though I'm not saying it's unimportant Winter, why do you need me to read the reports of a Grimm attack in Atlas?" The paper in her hand depicted a recent altercation between a pack of Beowolves and a small squad of hunters-in-training. Though the squad showed some signs of potential in being able to handle the situation, it was at most, something for the proper academy to look into. All in all, Weiss gave her sister a confused look.

Winter's response was as short as it was clear as she rotated her finger in a small circle. "The backside Weiss." She supplied.

"A-Ahâ€¦|" A small splash of color reaching her otherwise pale face, Weiss turned the paper over. Another attack encountered by the same

squad. This time however, it was by a much more lethal horde of Grimm. The attack seemed to include several Ursa making an appearance. Hell, the report even mentioned sightings of several Death Stalkers and a King Tajitsu.

Weiss' blood ran cold. That sort of conflict wasn't something that students could handle, no matter how talented they were. It would have taken, at the very least, a pair, or even a trio, of trained hunters and huntresses to subdue the horde safely.

"Keep reading Weiss. It isn't what you think." Winter, already aware of her sister's personality, spoke in advance. While she was cold, Weiss was always aware of the value of lives; otherwise, she wouldn't have spent so much of her time and energy trying to better the lives of the Faunus. Though, part of that may have had to do with Blake Belladonna pushing the motions for peaceful protest in concert with her teammate.

Not speaking, Weiss continued on with reading. The Grimm had gotten exceedingly close to the town at which the students were staying at before another individual, presumably hunter, had gotten involved. The next portion had Weiss standing up while she read out loud.

"_The Grimm had gotten within 100 yards of the town entrance before a person came to our aid. Though they did not identify themselves, this person, whom I can only assume to be a hunter, swept in at an exceedingly fast pace before tearing into the line of Grimm."_

At this point, Weiss could only appreciate the fact that she wasn't yelling the words as her mind read faster than her mouth could speak.

"_The, 'red blur' if I may name the individual as such, had quickly wiped out the small fry by the time we had regrouped and headed out to check the situation from a closer distance. Even then, the combatant was already in the process of beheading the King Tajitsu with a large scythe before we finally made it."_

A scythe, an honest to god scythe in battle. There were only two people in Remnant that used a scythe with that much skill, and one of them was perfectly comfortable at home in Patch.

"_Whoever they were, this combatant was exceedingly quick in a fight; even from our vantage point above the battlefield, we could only catch glimpses of them flitting towards each of the Grimm. The Death Stalkers, which were the only Grimm left, proceeded to seemingly explode as the figure approached each of them. Though we attempted to make contact with the individual as the combat ended, they immediately departed the scene, though not without, strangely enough, giving us a signal that we learned was for, 'all clear.' As much as we could make out, they were wearing a thick black cloak that obscured our view of their face, though there were reddish-black folds of cloth from what seemed to be a skirt that came from their feet. Otherwise, their appearance was concealed. -Team CRKL, Leader: Crest Luke"_

Weiss' eyes were wide as she spoke the final words. The silence that followed was deafening; no words were needed to address the elephant in the room. Eventually though, Winter broke the silence.

"Weiss, we have no confirmation of whether or not it truly is Ruby Rose. For all we know it could be another individual. The knowledge we hold is not the end all be all of the world. You could be going on a wild goose chase."

Weiss gave her a hard look. "It doesn't matter Winter. If it's possible that Ruby is out there, I have to go." It was just another thing that had changed since her school years. Weiss was no longer the unconfident individual that was all bravado without any substance.

"Why not just ask her sister and Miss Belladonna to investigate?" Winter tried to reason with Weiss.

"They're in Vacuo for another week. By the time they return, Ruby could be long gone; that's a risk that I'm not going to take." It had been two years damn it, and Weiss would sooner return the company to her father than give up the chance to find Ruby.

Winter however, clearly saw differently, shaking her head as she spoke. "Weissâ€¦ sister, I can go. Can't you trust me?"

Up until now, nothing had swayed Weiss' resolve as much as this. Trust. Something that was hard to come by from the frosty young woman. Winter was one of the first who had ever earned it, even before her team at Beacon. Her elder sister had been one of Weiss' only confidantes in the entire Schnee household, with the rest of her relatives being some of the more poisonous snakes in the industry already.

Still, Weiss shook her head in refusal. "I can't Winter. You know that I trust youâ€¦ but I can't give up on this." Looking down at her feet, the younger woman spoke in a remorseful tone. She didn't know why, it justâ€¦ felt like Ruby wouldn't be there if anybody went besides herself.

"I have to go Winterâ€¦ because it's Ruby." She thought for a moment before adding on. "Because she's my partner."

Winter stared at her sister. In the many years that she had known her sister, Winter had rarely seen Weiss so adamant about a decision.

"You don't understand Weiss, the terrain out there is harsh and the amount of Grimm high. The only reason we had a team of students out there in the first place was for that very reason. Youâ€¦ you haven'tâ€¦"

Winter's reluctance to continue was noted by Weiss; it was something that she had expected. Running the SDC left little time for combat practice; indeed, it left little time for anything that wasn't handing out orders or reviewing the numerous reports that made their way to her desk every day. While Weiss may have been talented, talent could only take you so far after months of not actually using it.

"I am a trained huntress. There is no reason that I shouldn't be able to venture out on my own." A steely glint flashed in bright blue eyes as Weiss spoke; the sign of no compromise was clear to Winter.

"If you must, then so be it." Winter relented. "But keep in contact. You don't know what might be out there." Her formal facade slipping at the thought of Weiss encountering mortal danger, Winter finally let some of her concern as an elder sister show.

"I know Winter." Weiss gave a weak smile. "Could you tell Blake and Yang about this? They aren't scheduled to get in contact until tomorrow evening and by thenâ€¦"

Winter waved away Weiss' concerns. "I'll receive them personally and explain the situation." She left the rest unsaid. What happens after the pair heard that their other teammate had gone to find their leader without themâ€¦ that was out of her hands.

"Thank you." Stepping forward, Weiss met Winter in an embrace, the two taking comfort in family. Separating a few moments later, Weiss shut down the displays on her desk, gathering up the documents and placing them in a locked drawer.

The SDC building went dark as the sisters exited into the parking lot; Winter entering a small black convertible while Weiss climbed into the driver's seat of an admittedly gaudy looking white sports sedan. A brief wave goodbye later, and the two were gone.

The drive back to her apartment was tortuous for Weiss despite driving usually being a sort of solace for the young woman. A feeling of freedom and speed, something that let her finally relate to her leader that moved much too quickly for her own good.

The lights of Atlas winked at her through the windshield, something that on any other night, she would have admired. Her hands gripped the steering wheel tightly as she went over the speed limit, something she rarely did. And yet, it felt as if she couldn't get back fast enough despite knowing that she wouldn't be leaving until tomorrow morning.

Almost robotic in her actions, all Weiss could think about as she took the elevator to her apartment and opened the door was the sheet of paper that Winter had handed her. A small town on the fringes of Atlas, it was a wonder that the town still stood given all the factors that ran against it.

Weiss opened up her closet, pulling out a small pack that she had been using for the small amount of missions that she had taken over the years. She quickly filled it with the essentials: food, water, and the like. Laying out a pair of clothes for tomorrow, Weiss proceeded to the bathroom.

A pristine sight greeted her as always. The room was spacious, but not overly so, with tan tiles lining the floor and one sink with a mirror over it. A shower was placed in the corner of the room, lined with textured glass to obscure the view of the person inside. Of course, the largest feature that took the predominant amount of space was a large bathtub that was set along the wall; seldom however, did Weiss utilize the piece.

Weiss stripped off her business suit and stepped into the shower, letting out a sigh of relief as the hot water descended on her. Weiss both loved and hated taking showers. For one, they allowed her to relax, to forget the stresses of the day and revel in the simple

comfort that was afforded to her. On the other hand, it also led to times like this, where she would be left completely alone with her thoughts.

Dare she hope? That after two years without a peep, that they finally had a solid lead? That Ruby may just be around the corner? The thought was almost too good to be true and yet Weiss' heartbeat sped up just at the thought. Her imagination drew up images of Ruby Rose in her trademark red cloak, Crescent Rose in one hand and the other waving at her like a dolt. Despite the impossibility of it all, Weiss wanted to believe.

As she laid in bed, dressed in her nightgown, these thoughts and more swept through Weiss' thoughts.

'_Ruby wait for me.'_

2. Chapter 2

Chapter 2:

Though she had used to despise waking up early in the morning, Weiss has quickly learned to adapt at Beacon. After all, preserving her hearing was something that she prioritized, especially when faced with the ungodly sound of Ruby's whistle. Team RWBY's leader had always seemed to be able to find the accursed object, no matter how many times Blake had hid it away.

Weiss' habit of waking up at the crack of dawn hadn't dulled over the years. If anything, it had only become more pronounced with the need to be punctual when running a business. The cold climate of Atlas had certainly helped with waking up in the morning, something that the CEO could now appreciate as she shivered in her thin nightgown.

Grabbing the pair of clothes that she had prepared the night before, Weiss quickly changed into a white blouse that went underneath a similarly colored knee-length jacket that was adorned with the Schnee family crest on the breast. The skirt that she had been so fond of as a student had been lengthened to reach below her knees, a light trim lining the bottom of it. The heels however, had quickly become something of a burden, especially when she would be wearing them for days that sometimes went for well over the typical 8 hour working day. Instead Weiss had exchanged them for a comfortable pair of boots that perhaps halfway up to her knees.

A small necklace also adorned the young woman's neck. The small piece of jewelry had been a gift from Ruby to her teammates at their graduation; at first, the elder girls had been skeptical of their young leader's ability to make such a thing, believing it to be some sort of elaborate prank. When they saw the single ornament on the otherwise simple chain however, they quickly changed their minds. Sealed within a layer of glass was a single rose petal, one that the three had become all too familiar with over the years.

'_It'll remind you of me!'_

Ruby's words echoed even now.

Shaking her head and ridding herself of such thoughts, Weiss grabbed what seemed to be a small cylinder from the table before snapping it to the belt that secured her skirt. Double checking everything, the young woman made her way out the door.

It was time to begin the search.

'_With any luck, I'll have Ruby back here by the end of next week.'_

She didn't really believe it. With team RWBY, nothing was ever that simple.

-Break-

"YAAAAHOOOOOOO!"

An elated yell filled the air as two figures appeared in the air above the blazing sands of Vacuo. Both were wearing heavy shawls in an effort to stop the fierce sun from burning their skin; a common practice among the residents of the desert nation. Several more distinct bangs filled the air as one of the two soared even further ahead, each burst in altitude accompanied by another projectile that flew from their fist.

The image of happiness however, was quickly shattered by the appearance of 3 Death Stalkers appearing from behind the sand dunes, only to meet the concussive explosions from each of the projectiles. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough to stop them in their tracks as the two people fell from the sky. Converging on the figure that had fired the projectiles, the 3 Death Stalkers swung a claw down, a massive amount of dust and debris flying up to accompany the impact.

"Yang!" The pieces of cloth on his head blown off by the winds, Sun Wukong's fierce blond hair made an appearance in the sweltering desert. Though many would have mistaken his outburst to be one of panic and concern for his teammate, they would have been mistaken.

"Yeah don't worry Monkey Boy, just havin' some fun on the way!" Yang Xiao Long was currently standing underneath the claws of the Death Stalkers, though perhaps _in between _ would have been a better description.

The blonde's hair draped down to her waist, glinting in the sun like a jewel which, given its owner's disposition towards it, it might as well have been. With the various cloths flung away in the flurry of movement, it was easy to see that the work of a Huntress had done wonders for the young woman's appearance.

The brown leather jacket stayed around her shoulders, though a belt of ammunition now now hung around each cuff. Instead of merely wrapping around her neck now, Yang's scarf draped down to around her midriff, the brawler's emblem proudly stitched upon it. Her stomach was now covered by the black shirt she wore underneath the jacket. Yang's penchant for short-shorts hadn't changed, and neither had the preference to wear a belt that had more pockets than her jacket. She had however, changed out her boots for ones that were heeled and traveled up to her thighs. All in all, it was almost enough to distract most from the three deadly Grimm that were intent on

skewering her.

"Just don't take too long, we have to make it to Vacuo's capital by today." A small chuckle worked its way up the monkey faunus' throat as he watched his friend of many years play with some of the most deadly monsters on Remnant like a dog might with a chew toy. Any remaining concerns that he may have had about his companion getting careless were blown away as Yang's fist made a devastating impact with the tender bottom of a Death Stalker's body.

"Hell yeah!" Anyone not used to the sight would have had eyes popping out of their head as the massive creature of Grimm achieved lift off, flying several feet off the ground before crashing down once again.

"You have no idea how good that feels after walking for two days straight!" Yang's personality hadn't dulled much over the years; if anything, the blonde bombshell had just gotten more explosive if she was to say so herself. The two Death Stalkers seemed to share this opinion as they ceased aggressively advancing towards the young huntress, instead choosing to glare menacingly at her as if she would run away.

What Yang had just displayed was the textbook method of fighting a Death Stalker. Avoid direct conflict when possible and allow it to attack; long staggering blows will allow you openings to take advantage of. When striking, aim for the soft underbelly where armor is absent in order to deal the most possible damage. Take care to avoid the stinger that contains deadly venom.

But who was Yang Xiao Long?

A confident smirk was on her face as she completely ignored standard protocol. Like Yang had proclaimed earlier, Sun and his wild (even by his standards) companion had been doing nothing but travel for the past few days in order to reach the capital of Vacuo, where they would catch the next airlift back to Vale.

Standard? Safety? You may as well have asked for a monsoon to hit Vacuo!

With Yang dashing forward, flames licked the ends of Ember Celica as their wielder brought them up.

"YAH!"

CRACK

With a loud crunch, Sun greeted a sight that would've had most hunters and huntresses wide-eyed surprise with a resigned sigh. "Well, I guess that was a lot faster than waiting to counter."

Yang had swung her fist downwards like a sledgehammer, the strike igniting in a brilliant flame as it came in contact with the Death Stalker's rock hard shell that would be blown apart as easily as tissue paper as Ember Celica descended. Screeching in an inhumane expression of pain, the unlucky victim of Yang's strike staggered back a few steps before collapsing, dead.

As for the remaining creature of Grimm? It didn't even get a

chance to attempt another strike before the dragon's wrath bore down on it with the force that had so easily crushed its brethren

"Alright, we're all cleaned up here monkey-boy, good to go." Yang dusted off the sand that had ended up on her shoulders, Ember Celica folding back up into the bracelets that rested on Yang's wrists.

Sun gave a thumbs up as he put the shawls back on his head: getting a few moments of fresh air was nice, a sunburn along the length of his neck and face? Not nearly as much. Looking back to the map displayed on his scroll, the faunus figured about two more hours until they made it to the capital. Once there— his attention was diverted by a notification on the digital screen.

"Hey, you in the mood for a drink once we get back?" Sun, along with Neptune, had become something of a drinking buddy with Yang since they had graduated Beacon. It made sense in a way, since neither of Yang's teammates shared the blonde's inclinations to become mind-numbingly drunk.

Still, Yang gave him a questioning look. "I thought we were in a rush so that we could get back in time for our flight."

The monkey faunus at least had the sense to look sheepish as he rubbed the back of his head. "Yeah about that—" he held his scroll up in his hands. "I just checked the flight schedules. Looks like they're not taking off until tomorrow because of sandstorms that'll be coming in the area soon. So we still gotta hurry back, just not for the same reasons."

Yang let out a frustrated sigh before resigning herself to throwing on the shawls that had been blown away during the fight.

"Hey Sun—"

"What is it?" Taking a look back towards Yang, Sun Wukong could only try to not panic as he noticed the mischievous grin on his companion's face. The sound of Ember Celica deploying should have been his first warning.

"There is a faster way back instead of walking you know." Rounds slid into place, a very audible clicking noise notifying Sun of his impending doom. He was all for fun, but this—?

"I don't know about—"

It was too late. Yang had, in a flash, hooked the faunus by the neck while running off the nearest sand dune, firing Ember Celica all the while.

"-THIIIISSSSS!"

"TOO LATE SLOWPOKE!"

Shouts of panic and excitement were reported by the guards of Vacuo's capital only half an hour later.

-Break-

Quiet, just how she liked it.

Blake Belladonna gave a short glance over the novel she was reading.

Correction, just how they liked it.

Having finished their mission earlier in the day, the feline faunus and her partner for this particular mission, Lie Ren, were taking some time to kick back after the week's worth of hard work.

And so here they were, Blake with a book in hand and a cup of coffee in front of her, Ren with only a cup of tea, seemingly just enjoying the peace and quiet. A small smile came to her lips; had the two of them been paired on a team at Beacon, Blake felt as if they would have made a fairly good one.

Her teamâ€¦

Of all of team RWBY, Blake felt as if Weiss had probably been the one most affected by the little red speedster's disappearance, though Yang had come in at a close second. The sisters had been inseparable, their rambunctious and noisy personalities serving to balance the quiet and calm that their partners had brought to the table. Blake still had Yang as her pocket of sunshine, Weissâ€¦ was left in Atlas with nobody. Sure, the occasional visit and greetings were exchanged, but it truly wasn't the same as having someone there to look out for you.

"Blake." Said woman flicked her head up, realizing that she had been somewhat zoning out over her thoughts. Inquisitive pink eyes peered at her own, a mixture of curiosity and concern that she quickly waved off.

"It's nothing serious Ren, just the same as always."

A rare expression of sadness found its way onto the martial artist's face. "Ruby?" The loss of team RWBY's leader hadn't just affected their team, the ripples had made their way out to their friends as well. Team JNPR had taken it especially hard, seeing as how the two teams were nearly merged at the hip. Had there been 8 person teams allowed, you wouldn't have known the difference.

Blake's eyes stared into her cup of coffee, the brown liquid offering a distorted reflection of her face. "Since when has it been anything else?"

"She's probably fine. We both know that Ruby is more than capable." It was a sound argument. Given the fact that Ruby had been at the top of her class in terms of combat capability at the end of their fourth year at Beacon, she was in very secure hands: her own.

"That's about defending herself." The subtly implied meaning wasn't lost on Ren.

"She had to learn how to get along on her own sometime, I'm sure she manages in her own way." The uncertainty in his voice wasn't missed by Blake.

"Ren, you know as well as I do that Ruby would rather spend the

entirety of the day polishing Crescent Rose instead of talking to anyone."

"You'reâ€¦" Ren couldn't lie through his teeth. "...probably right." He responded to Blake's deadpan tone. They all knew about Ruby's obsession, yes obsession, with her weapon. It had become something of an urban legend among the first year students amusingly enough. The disembodied voice whispering sweet nothings in the dead of night in the machine room on weekends. In reality it was simply Ruby maintaining her weapon following the leadership courses and homework that had been assigned to all third year leaders and above.

"It's been two years Ren" Blake drained her cup before speaking again. "Two years without a word of contact. No messages, no calls, no nothing." Setting her book down, she ran a hand through her now shoulder length hair. A white jacket went over her shoulders as a black blouse went underneath it. Her partner's influence was apparent, a scarf with Blake's emblem winding itself around the faunus' neck.

"I know Blakeâ€¦ I know. But her uncle was clear when he told us that she was safe. Right now, it's all we can do to believe him." Ren had never been one for large emotional displays, but that didn't mean that he couldn't empathize with others. Ruby had been just as precious to him as she had been to her other friends.

Blake stood up, taking her book with her. "Believe me, I want to trust in Ruby's uncle as much as everyone else does. If she's safe though, why doesn't she get in contact with any of us?" Blake's distress was clear, the serene air that had surrounded the two of them gone.

"What if she was forbidden by her uncle? She could be training." Ren elaborated, it had always been his role on the team that had been so excitable so calm everyone down. "You don't know what happened, so you shouldn't assume the worst."

"I-I knowâ€¦ but it's just thatâ€¦" Blake had always assumed the worst case scenario. It had saved her hide on multiple occasions, be it on during her early years with the White Fang, or in her years as a huntress. Right now though, she wished that she could think anything but what her instincts told her to.

"I understand, but you should know as well as I doâ€¦" Ren finished off his own tea. "That Ruby isn't someone to give up, at all."

Blake stared for a moment before replying.

Blake!

We'll definitely be able to stop them Blake, don't give up!

I'll always be around for you to talk to Blake, I'm your team leader after all!

'_Then where are you now Ruby?'_

"I know Ren, I know."

3. Chapter 3

Chapter 3:

It took a lot to make a Weiss Schnee even contemplate giving up, to make any Schnee think about giving up really. And yet, the youngest in the Schnee line was just about ready to call it a day, having spent much of it hiking her way up the mountainside in order to reach the town of Eins, the town which Team CRKL had stopped at for their mission. Whereas the group of students had taken two days to scale the distance, Weiss had made the trek in merely a few hours. Though the hike itself hadn't been particularly treacherous, the various Grimm that she had encountered had taken a toll on her stamina.

Speaking of which, a few more were now making themselves known from the cliffs to Weiss' left. By her count, there were around ten Grimm that stood packed together luckily, none of them were especially dangerous. Though the common Beowolves and Ursai had long since failed to be a threat to her, the terrain itself made this battle treacherous. Combine that with Weiss' already failing stamina, and it was enough to make the woman take this battle seriously.

Flicking the cylinder that she had packed into her hand, Weiss quickly pressed a switch on the base that had the entire thing expanding rapidly; first were the multiple, progressively thinner, pieces that shot out only to be reigned in by Weiss' aura. Each piece snapped together, the base of the cylinder forming a guard while a thin segment that had remained in Weiss' hand became *the hilt. The blade itself was white, a carbon copy of Myrtenaster right down to the length and width. The guard however, had changed significantly. Gone were the cycling dust chambers, the weapon itself now imbued with the power of Nature's Wrath through the engravings on the guard and hilt.

Into Team RWBY's later years at Beacon, Weiss had quickly learned that carrying copious amounts of highly volatile dust was not an option on most missions. Given that the then heiress' fighting style depended largely on her dustcraft, changes had to be made; the result was a complete reconstruction of her beloved weapon with copious amounts of help from Ruby. It had taken quite a while to build, and even longer for Weiss to get used to the now extremely light weapon, but in the end, the benefits far outweighed any losses.

As much as Weiss wanted to stop to admire the craftsmanship of her weapon, the roaring of the Ursai quickly prompted a pristine white glyph to form underneath her. Being propelled at a velocity that would have otherwise been impossible for her, Weiss quickly slowed as she reached the apex of her leap. A flare of red light lit up the sky as the figure in the air descended; flames burst onto the Grimm as Weiss slammed into the ground. Several of the Beowolves were killed almost instantly, even the Ursa were damaged by the fierce attack, backing away from the epicenter of the blast.

Not wasting any time, Weiss' weapon flashed in the light of the fire as it ran through one of the nearest Beowolves that hadn't been destroyed by the fire. Metal met bone as Myrtenaster clashed against the claws of an Ursa. Weiss' body quickly moved back, disengaging the clash in order to regain her mobility. Another glyph formed behind her as she was propelled forward at a breakneck pace, leaving a deep

slash on the Ursa, ending it's life. Though this wasn't a fight that took a lot of energy, it had to be understood that Weiss had repeated a similar scene many times today. Humans had a limit, and Weiss was rapidly approaching hers; thus, it was with a breath of relief that the white-haired woman ended the last of the creatures of Grimm.

Letting out a huff as she returned Myrtenaster to its original state, Weiss once again steeled herself as she fingered the necklace around her neck, reminded of why she was here. Ignoring the growing fatigue, she continued on with ragged steps.

'_I have to find her. I can't let Ruby think thatâ€¦'_that _was all our partnership was worth.'_ Pulling down the white beanie hat that she had added to her outfit upon entering the snowy mountains, Weiss recalled herâ€¦ less than superb exchange with Ruby when the latter had first informed her team of her long-term mission with her uncle.

-Break-

"_WEEIIIIIISSS!" Said heiress braced herself, already prepared for the impact that was no doubt coming for her. Several moments later, as expected, an ecstatic Ruby Rose collided with her partner of four years with nothing less than complete elation in her tone._

"_Can you believe it? We're graduates!" The exuberant redhead had her arms thrown around Weiss neck in a hug from behind. "We're huntresses!"_

As much as she wanted to give Ruby a knock on the head before scolding the girl, well, now more of a woman than anything else, Weiss just couldn't find it in her heart to yell at the moment. Not when the happiness in her partner's voice was so apparent.

Instead, she opted to remind her of some realism. "Yes Ruby, we are. We still have to make our way out there in the world you know." Constructive criticism, yes, that was how their relationship had always worked.

_Of course, that didn't mean that the comment didn't elicit a slight pout from Ruby. No matter how skilled of a huntress she was, it seemed as if the girl would retain the same innocence that she always had. "Don't be a spoilsport, today's our big day!" Knowing that the white-haired woman in front of her would disagree. _

Weiss gave an amused smile, already knowing where this conversation would lead to. "And it's also the first day that we're professionals instead of students Ruby." Seeing her partner play the part and seemingly deflate, Weiss quickly followed up. "But I suppose it's okay if we take today to celebrate."

_Ruby's grin was more or less a reflection of how everyone around her felt at the moment; resplendent in their caps and gowns, excited for their new future. _

"_Hey shrimps, we have to get going! Dad said he'd give us a ride!" Weiss gave a scowl as the atmosphere was broken by the loudest, and regrettably, tallest, member of their team, Yang Xiao Long. Standing

next to the blonde girl was her own partner, one whom Weiss had come to appreciate as the only one who could reign in her fiery counterpart, Blake Belladonna._

"_Taiyang is waiting at the entrance, apparently we'll be heading to Patch to celebrate." The feline faunus supplied an explanation with a bemused smile. Having only grown more relaxed over the years, Blake had managed to put her demons behind her, now focusing on the future, instead of her past._

They had started out as a team of four, hardly a team at that. A 15 year old teenager, a haughty heiress, an ex-terrorist, and a hot-headed rebel. Yet somehow, the mismatched group of girls had somehow managed to become an acclaimed team at the most prestigious combat academy on Remnant.

Before Weiss could respond however, Ruby had already interjected. "Alright girls, we've graduated. Our next mission is to celebrate! The night will be filled with cookies!" Ruby's eyes almost glimmered in anticipation of the sugary armageddon was no doubt due to occur tonight, before she saw the rest of her team watching her. "A-And of course other stuff too! Like- Likeâ€¦!"

Seeing the three older girls in front of her stifling laughs, Ruby stuck her tongue out in defiance. Having grown used to their leader's behavior, the three simply followed her towards the entrance, ready to spend a night out on the town. Hopefully without firing any bullets this time.

It was only later that Ruby and Weiss would have a chance to speak to one another again, after the girls had already retired for the night. The two sat next to one another in Ruby's room, Yang and Blake having retired to the former's dwelling.

"_Weiss."_

"_What is it Ruby?" The heiress huffed, trying desperately to get a wink of sleep on the inflatable mattress that she had packed in advance._

"_Do youâ€¦ you know, think that we'll be able to stay partners?" Seeing her partner turn over and give her an incredulous look, Ruby quickly elaborated. "What I mean is, uhâ€¦ do you think we'll still do missions together?"_

Weiss opened her mouthâ€¦ and then closed it just as quickly. She had been tempted to immediately reply with the most pragmatic answer when she stopped herself. Somewhere deep down she discovered that she, not so surprisingly, had the same question.

"_...Yes Ruby. I'll see to it that we can stay partners at least some of the time." And damn anyone who was in the way of a Schnee driven towards a goal._

_A slightly stunned look on her face, Ruby's expression soon morphed into a chuckle. _

"_What?" Outraged at the fact that she was being laughed at, Weiss immediately dared the room's other occupant to reply._

"_Nothing Weiss." And after a slight delay. "But thank you, and I promise too."_

"_That's what I thought." An indignant huff followed, one that the two were long used to. Yes, Weiss thought to herself, life was good._

Break-

"If only I had known what she was planningâ€|" Weiss gritted her teeth in frustration, the wind now whipping against her face. What had happened the next dayâ€| would forever haunt Weiss' nightmares.

'_Thenâ€| maybe I wouldn't have said what I did.'_

-Break-

"_YOU'RE DOING WHAT?!" Ruby winced at the screech that had come from her partner; she knew that it was optimistic to hope that Weiss would take the news calmly, but she didn't think it would be this bad. Then again, how could Ruby not have known? Otherwise, she wouldn't have asked Weiss to come out with her to a little secluded patch of forest before she broke the news to her partner._

"_I-I'm heading out on a long-term mission with Uncle Qrow in a week."_

"_And how long will you be gone?" The heiress' sharp eyes bore into her own, demanding an answer._

"_I'm not sureâ€|" _

"_What do you mean you're not sure?!" Even through her yelling, Weiss knew that she was being unreasonable. Hunters and huntresses rarely had a set timetable on their missions, long-terms missions even more so. At this moment in time though, she didn't particularly care. The painful tightness in her chest reminded the pale woman only too clearly of what her team had come to mean to her. She was well aware that they would be separated when they finally went on missions; and yet she had, for some reason, held it in her heart that Ruby at least, her partner, would stick with her. They had promised._

The hurt that showed in Ruby's now gleaming silver eyes was only too easy to read for Weiss. "I'm sorry Weissâ€| butâ€| I can'tâ€|" The words were full of hesitancy, pleading, and most of all, desperation; desperation for Weiss to understand.

Unfortunately, emotions were seldom reasonable. It gave Weiss some kind of vindictive pleasure at seeing Ruby in such a state; to know that with a her approval or denial, Ruby would hang on to her every word. It lasted only for a moment before Weiss mentally recoiled, appalled that she would sink that low.

"_And what if I come with you?" She still held on to the small hope that she would be able to accompany Ruby. It wasn't a plea, it wasn't a demand, just a hope._

_Dismay filled Ruby's face, something that made Weiss regret her question. "It's just me and Uncle Qrowâ€| he told me from the

start."_

"_And since when have you known Ruby?" Weiss' throat was dry, her words sounding hoarse as she spoke. The anger was back and burning in her; the clenching of her heart was almost painful._

"_..." Ruby mumbled while looking down at her feet._

"_Speak clearly." The sharp and, for the first time in years, malice filled scolding came all too easily._

"_A month." Ruby stood in place, unwilling to see the look on her partner's face. _

_That would soon change as a short laugh tore itself free from Weiss' throat. Ruby's head whipping up to see what had happened. _

"_A month. An entire month..." Up until now, nothing had frightened Ruby the way that her partner's voice now sounded. _

No. Weiss wasn't supposed to sound like that!

Her eyes weren't supposed to look like that!

"_Who else knew? Was it just me who didn't know? Blissfully unaware like a fool?!"_

"_No! No no no, Weiss please! It's not like that!" Her voice cracking, Ruby tried to patch up the situation as best she could._

"_Then what is it?! Why didn't you tell me Ruby Rose?!"_

The crimson haired girl's mouth open and closed, hands clasped together and held up to her chest. She desperately wanted to speak, but no words would come.

"_We're done." Ruby felt her stomach sink, whatever remained of the celebration dinner last night now threatening to empty itself onto the ground._

"_Best Teammateâ€¦ That was silly wasn't it. Hunters and huntresses go out on missions alone all the time."_

No, this wasn't supposed to happen! Ruby wanted to scream. Weiss is supposed to stay with me! After all, Weiss wasâ€¦ Weiss wasâ€¦

"_But that wasn't the only empty promise I made was it?"_

"_Weiss! I'm sorry- I'll- I-" NO. Why did her voice work now! Why couldn't she say what she wanted._

Recalling their promise last night, a wild panic surfaced in Ruby's mind. More than anything, she didn't want to hear the words that followed.

"_Goodbye, Ruby." Her tone was hollow- dead. "You're a huntress now, congratulations."_

As if she had waited for it, Weiss began to move away, leaving her red-cloaked leader to herself.

"_No! Weiss please!" The words were distorted, Ruby's voice choked by her tears that were now streaming down her face. "Please Weiss! come back."_

It was too late, the heiress already too far away to hear the weak voice of the girl who had finally found it.

Break-

The worst had been when Qrow had returned after two months with no Ruby in sight.

No Ruby.

Weiss had been ready to admit to her wrongs, to beg her partner to forgive her for the words that had spilled out from her mouth that night. The guilt that she had caused anything but happiness to come to that happy and innocent soul was enough to have her losing sleep. She had nearly lost it when Qrow had said that his niece wouldn't be returning any time soon.

It's my fault.

Clenching a fist around Myrtenaster once again, Weiss reaffirmed her resolve.

"It's my fault, so I'll bring that dolt back." The vow was spoken to the empty air as Myrtenaster snapped open, ready to rend the pack of Grimm that was standing in front of her. It was at least three times as large as the one she had eliminated previously. The fact that it was mainly made of Ursa only drove the difficulty up.

The next few moments were a blur of emotion and combat. Heat flared around her as red dust exploded into brilliant flame; glyphs propelling her back and forth among the pack. Just as she was about to behead another Ursa, a bout of dizziness assaulted her senses. It was only natural; Weiss had been fighting all day, climbing the mountain without any sort of rest. The fact that she had slept fitfully last night hadn't helped her stamina either, not withholding the fact that she had always had the worst stamina out of Team RWBY.

The moment was weakness was enough for an Ursa to slam a paw into her side, sending her careening off on her side, rolling through the snow as she eventually slowed. Searing pain ridding Weiss of her dizziness quickly, she looked up only to find a Death Stalker staring her down.

No! NO, I can't stop here. I have to find Ruby!

And yet, her body wouldn't listen to her. Blood stained the white jacket she was wearing, dripping on to the ground as it slid off the pure white garment. Weiss could only watch as the tail of the Death Stalker swept up, ready to pierce her body with its wickedly sharp end.

She closed her eyes, waiting for the blow to come, for her end to

finally come. She deserved it for what she did to Ruby. She waited for death.

And waitedâ€¦|

And waitedâ€¦|

But the blow never came. Instead, a horrific screech of pain was what finally made her eyes snap open. The figure in front of her was unknown and yet, hauntingly familiar at the same time. It was clearly them who had saved her, the stinger of the Death Stalker now sitting in the snow, having been lopped off by â€¦|

"Ru...by?"

...Scythe

A sad smile made itself known on the figure's face as they turned around, the wind now blowing off the hood they had worn.

"Heya Weiss...:"

****A/N****

Well, this is the first time that I've written an author's note for this story that I hope all my readers have been enjoying. I'd just like to leave a few words of thanks for all those who have left a review, favorited, or followed the story. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Unfortunately, there is no secure update schedule for this story, as it depends on my schedule and availability. It is guaranteed however, that before a period of absence that will last longer than 2 weeks, I will leave a notice in the chapter before said period.

Additionally, I will say this now, I have no intention of making this story include Bumblebee as well. The reason being that I do not believe myself competent enough to write a satisfying story for those two at the moment. I hope that you will understand my decision.

Once again, thank you all for reading, and I hope you will follow this story to it's conclusion.

4. Chapter 4

Chapter 4:

It was one of the rare days in Atlas where the air wasn't frigidly cold. The fact that the country was in the extreme north had also led to the constant exposure to sunlight. The pleasant combination was not wasted on Yang Xiao Long, who was currently making her way to one of the various cafes that lined the streets of the veritable metropolis in order to meet with her longtime friend and partner, Blake Belladonna.

The two had already decided to find one another after finding that the end date for both of their missions coincided very conveniently. They were also expecting a certain CEO to be there as well, though, strangely enough, said person had not contacted either of

them.

Easily sweeping the thought from her mind with work as the excuse, Yang slipped into a smaller establishment on the side of the road with an older sign that simply read "Cafe" above it. It certainly wasn't as modern or "chic" as the other stores on the street, but it certainly had many charms that other places weren't able to match. Most importantly, it had the unique feature of offering private rooms to parties who wished to reserve one. It was perfect for people who wished to perhaps work on something quietly, or in this case, hold a private conversation.

Letting the door close slowly behind her, Yang made her way up to the counter where a middle-aged man, about 40 and some years old was reading the paper. Glancing at her from over the edge of his paper, the man folded up the object before shooting her a questioning look.

" 'scuse me. Was wondering if there was a reservation for a Miss Belladonna anywhere on there." She gestured to the computer monitor that sat in front of him. "The name is Yang Xiao Long." She added. Even as she spoke, the words "Miss Belladonna" in her voice sounded strange to Yang's ears. At least the blonde knew where her more "refined" teammate had acquired her mannerisms.

After a momentary glance, he answered as he handed her a key; all of the rooms were locked for privacy purposes unless otherwise requested by the patron. The only ways to get in, legally anyways, was to either have your name on the list, or to have the other person let you in themselves. "Miss Belladonna will be in the last room at the end of the hallway. If you need anything feel free to ding us with the pager that is inside the room."

Giving the man a nod, Yang departed for the previously indicated room. Giving it a light knock to indicate her arrival, Yang inserted the key into the doorknob and twisted. The room was of a medium size, a clean cloth couch lining the wall for anyone to relax. A small window was open to the side street that it looked out into, though it could be just as easily obscured with the curtain that lined it. Yang's attention however, was caught by the person who was sitting at the single table in the room.

"Still got a thing for tuna after all these years huh Blake?" Her tone filled with mirth, Yang stared at the feline faunus that was furiously attempting to swallow what seemed to be a too-big-bite of a tuna sandwich.

Taking pity on the raven-haired woman, Yang closed the door with one arm as the other handed her the glass of water that sat on the table. After taking a panicked sip, Blake was finally able to respond.

"You could have waited for me to open the door!" She shot the other woman a dirty look.

"Eh, but where's the fun in that kitty-cat!" The grin on the blonde's face told Blake exactly how much Yang actually cared about the glare that was sent her way.

"Please, don't tell me that your humor has extended to rhymes now as well."

Taking her own seat next to Blake, Yang's smile never faltered. "Of course not 'Miss Belladonna,' what on earth would give you that idea? Besides, I know you yearned for my puns day and night while I was gone."

"Of course Yang, whatever you say." Blake was, of course, unamused by the display. Still, she appreciated the time she spent with her teammates nevertheless. "Any word on if Weiss is on her way?"

Seeing the subject switch to the rapier expert in their team, Yang responded with a negative. "Can't say I would know. I thought that Ice Queen woulda gotten in touch with you if anything."

Blake shrugged, it wasn't uncommon for the shorter woman to be too busy to meet with them, though she would always try her best. "Well, that aside, how was your mission with Sun in Vacuo?"

"Boooringâ€¦| A week of guiding a caravan through the desert, except there was nothing going on anyways. I could feel the sand between my boobs only a few hours in! It was amazing that I made it all the way without dying of boredom!"

Secretly, Blake also found it amazing how Yang always managed to have talk so shamelessly; then again, her partner had never been known for her modesty, even back at Beacon.

"At least we got into a scuffle with some Death Stalkers on the way back, managed to get some exercise that wasn't walking after doing way too much of it." Yang finished her story while scratching her head, looking for something on the menu. "Anyways, how was your mission?"

"It was the elimination of a pack of Grimm on the edges of Vale. Ren and I were more than enough for a pack of that size. Not to mention the biggest Grimm that we ran into was an Ursa."

Thinking back to the few days that she had extra at the end, Blake's thoughts naturally went back to the conversation with Ren.

"Yangâ€¦| did you get any news on your end?" The lilac eyes hardened; there was no need for an explanation as to what Blake was asking.

"No, still haven't heard anything." Her fist clenched in frustration. Before Yang could potentially cause any damage to the table however, a knock at the door sounded.

Trying her best to put a smile on her face, Yang stood up to open the door, already suspecting she knew who it was.

"Hey Wei- Winter?" Standing there in her Atlas military uniform, was Winter Schnee.

It wasn't as if the Atlas Specialist had never met her sister's teammates before; far from it in fact. There had been occasions where various parts of team RWBY had cooperated with Winter Schnee for one reason or another. It was simply that the latter had never deigned to meet with them outside of working, save for a few occasions.

As efficient as always, Winter went straight to the point. "May I?" She indicated the door, preferring not to wait until Yang's impression of a fish ended naturally.

"O-Oh yeah, sorry." Stepping out of the way, Yang allowed the elder Schnee sibling to walk into the room before closing the door again. As the woman took a seat next to Blake's other side, the faunus was already posing a question.

"Not that we aren't happy to see you, but what are you doing here?" The relationship between Winter Schnee and the remaining members of team RWBY had always been one of mutual respect, not of friends. Being curious was only natural, if slightly prude.

As always however, Winter forwent the formalities and went straight to the point. "My sister has left a message for you both."

That got the attention of both girls. What kind of situation had Weiss gotten herself into that she couldn't get in contact with the two of them herself?

"You will understand better if you read this." She handed the same document she had to Weiss two nights ago to the two huntresses. The information was classified, but only to a basic level; hunters and huntresses were certainly entitled to it.

As she noticed the two of them approaching the end of the report, their eyes growing wider with each line they read, Winter finally spoke.

"Weiss left two days ago to investigate this lead. She was unable to tell you due the fact that the two of you were away and without access to the CCT. I informed her that it was foolish to go alone, but she was insistent in doing so."

Winter waited for the reaction that she knew was coming and was surprised when it didn't. Instead of immediately exploding and charging out the door as many would have expected, Yang only sent a concerned look at Blake.

"They should be okay Yang." Blake recalled the words that Ren had spoken to her only a few days ago. "Weiss is strong. Ruby too."

Winter was puzzled to say the least. "I would have thought that the two of you would be the first ones to pursue my sister in her search for your missing teammate."

"Well ya see—" Yang scratched the back of her head in a sheepish manner, knowing that she was the main cause for this expectation. "We trust Weiss." The lilac eyes opened from their previously closed state. "Ice Queen might be pricklier than the cactus I almost stabbed myself on in Vacuo last week, but she's also a part of Team RWBY."

Winter was floored to say the least.

"Not to mention." Blake added on. "You said Weiss left two days ago right? With that kind of lead, we wouldn't be able to catch up before she was already on her way back considering where she was

headed."

The small smile on Winter's face would've been nearly unnoticeable unless someone was watching her specifically.

It seemed as if Weiss wasn't the awkward little girl anymore. After all, she had made some very good friends.

-Break-

Weiss' eyes were as wide as she could manage in her dazed state. The previously fiery pain that had been tearing its way through her nerves was now little more than a dull throb in her side, her shock doing a better job of relieving her pain than the most expensive analgesic.

"Ruby!" The name came out as a breath, her burning lungs screaming at her for air, but her brain too taken with the scene in front of her. Perhaps Weiss hadn't expect it, but in reality, it only made sense that Ruby would have changed the most out of all of them; the girl had been 15 when she entered Beacon. Six years later and the young woman had done more than simply grow taller; at the prime of her life, Ruby was beautiful.

Gone was the baby fat that had still remained on her face, a sleek paleness remaining despite how much of her time was spent outdoors. Her previously short hair was now let down, the crimson tips now reaching beyond the woman's shoulders, a small hair ornament in the shape of her namesake adorning it. The rest of Ruby's attire had clearly been adjusted for combat; the red cloak now only hung on one shoulder, trailing down her back until it reached her waist.

A black wool sweater hugged her figure, and opening on the lower back showing a large scar that Weiss was certain had not been there before. Long dark maroon pants were worn underneath something akin to a sarong. The pitch-black cloth was trimmed in the dark red that had come to be expected of Ruby, with small silver trinkets in the shape of crosses being sown into the edge as well.

One moment was Weiss almost drinking in the sight of her partner!

'_If I can even call her that anymore!'

Then Ruby, quite literally, vanished.

Disappeared.

Faded Away.

Whatever words you wanted to use, the redhead was gone, a deafening silence left in her place. It was only broken moments later by the sound of something falling to the ground; the sight that complimented this left Weiss wondering if she was still dizzy from the hit.

As if by magic, the Death Stalker that had been previously threatening her life, laid neatly bisected lengthwise in front of her. Crescent Rose danced in Ruby's hands, the weapon itself having undergone several changes along with its wielder. The shaft and blade were both lengthened to match up with Ruby's reach and height.

Though it had previously towered over the young girl when she wielded it, the size of the scythe now was such that Weiss doubted whether most lesser huntsmen could even lift it, much less wield it. Still, it didn't prevent the reaper from carving through the Grimm at a blitzkrieg pace.

Beowolf, Ursa, Death Stalker. It didn't matter to the grim reaper's blade as it tore through all of them, cold metal meeting bone and flesh that just as quickly yielded to the deadly weapon. Already there were much fewer Grimm in the area, a testament to Ruby's skill and efficiency. Ending just as suddenly as it had begun, the engagement hadn't managed to last more than a few minutes at most. The sound of Crescent Rose being sheathed signaling the end of the fighting.

Now came the hard part.

"Ruby." Weiss spoke as if drunk, her voice sounding alien even to herself.

"Third times the charm?" Bewildered blue eyes met silver as even Weiss' apprehension was given pause at the remark.

"Excuse me?"

"Third time you've called my name today Princess." Ruby chuckled a bit at the look that she had rarely seen even two years ago.

"That- That doesn't matterâ€¦|" Struggling to come up with something intelligent, the white-haired woman opted for a question instead. "Where have you been Ruby?"

"Oh, you know, here and there." The answer was purposely vague, Weiss could tell as much by the smile on Ruby's face.

Relieved that she could at least find _something_ familiar about Ruby, Weiss replied in kind. "Oh? And where would that be?" A single eyebrow raised, the CEO gave no room for more roundabout answers.

"Everywhere!" Of course, the look that had many lesser businessmen cowering had no effect on Ruby. "Seriously though, I've been around everywhere. Vacuo, Mistral, Atlas, you name it."

Shaking her head, Weiss accepted that she would probably never get a proper answer to the question, at least, not to the extent that she wished it to be. At least Ruby was behaving like herself, something that Weiss was confused, but more importantly, relieved by. "Whatever, that's not important right now. What is important is that you come back Ruby."

The smile stayed on her face. "Why is that? I don't think anybody is in mortal danger right? Last I heard, the White Fang was still defunct."

"Because-" Weiss hesitated. _She_ wanted Ruby to come home. What reason did Ruby have to come back? Because the crimsonette missed the rest of her friends as well?

"I'm perfectly fine out here Weiss. I knew that Uncle Qrow telling

you guys wouldn't have done it, but now that you see me all in one piece, it's fine right?" That smile was still there.

"You- How can you be so calm about this? Ignoring the pain in her side, Weiss shuffled her way towards Ruby, her fury that had been slowly building starting to show through.

"You've been gone for two years Ruby." She stomped a foot into the ground. "Two _years_. We didn't know what happened to you. You didn't communicate with anyone!"

"Wellâ€¦" Rubbing a hand on the back of her head, a sheepish _smile _made it's way onto Ruby's face. "I didn't have much time you know?" It was a weak excuse, not nearly enough to satisfy Weiss' need for an explanation.

"That's not good enough you damn dunce!" Politeness and dignity forgotten, Weiss grabbed Ruby's shoulder, shaking slightly. "We were all worried about you! The least you could do is take some responsibility."

As if stunned by the sudden outburst, Ruby's facial expression didn't change. "Hey, if that's what this is about I can call you guys from now on." Though Weiss didn't see it, Ruby bit down on the inside of her cheek.

A low growl was the reply. "No Ruby Rose. I am not leaving unless you're coming with me. Blake, Yang, and I all made a promise to bring you back if we ever found you."

Weiss didn't pay much attention to the words that she spoke, anger and stubbornness clouding her judgement.

The same could not be said for Ruby.

"Promise." With one word, the rush of memories came back to Weiss, regret and apprehension, among other things, filled her. It had been just one word, but for the two women, it may as well have been thousands.

"So you _promised _them right Weiss? Just like you promised me." The dam had been broken.

"No Ruby wait. I'm sorr-"

"_No _Weiss." Ruby spat out the words through gritted teeth. "You're not sorry. You can't _be _sorry, because you don't even know what you did!"

Weiss was suddenly very pale, even more than usual.

"_You_ broke your promise to _me_ Weiss, so why should I believe that anything you say is any better?!" The cheerful silvers from before had become a hard steel, a cold glint radiating enmity showing itself.

"I _trusted _you." A deafening bang as Crescent Rose once again made itself known, slamming into the tough rock beneath their feet. "And you showed me exactly how much that meant to you back then." That goddamn smile was _still there, _the same smile that Ruby had worn

since the two had seen one another.

How could Weiss have believed that the smile that Ruby Rose wore on her face was real?

When the former had relentlessly crushed the other's heart those two short years ago.

"I never forgot Weiss." As the woman met those cold grey eyes, she couldn't help but feel a horrible sense of wrongness. "Just. Go."

The burst of white-hot emotion that had come forth like an inferno to burn Weiss was now retracted, Ruby's weapon doing similarly with a cold efficiency as its wielder turned away and began to walk.

It wasn't right.

It wasn't right for those grey orbs to contain anything but happiness. For them to look so hurt, so _betrayed_

"Ruby"

"Go."

"I'm sorry."

"Weiss. This is the last time. Just go."

And for a moment, Ruby thought that her former partner _had_ _left_. She threw the ever familiar red hood on, the silence surely signifying a lack of presence.

"Please Ruby." The mentioned female froze. In their relationship of six years, Ruby had never heard Weiss Schnee of all people, _beg_.

Once she turned around, she wished that she hadn't. Slick tears were running down Weiss' face, the drops twinkling in the fading light of day.

The sight made something stir in Ruby's mind. The scene of a girl in a red hood, desperately begging for a white-haired beauty to stay.

"_No_ Weiss please" The words were distorted, Ruby's voice choked by her tears that were now streaming down her face. "Please Weiss_ come back."

Ruby hit her lip until it bled. Why did she remember now?

"I'm so s-sorry Ruby" A small hiccup interrupted Weiss' apology, sobs wracking her small frame. "I never wanted to-" She paused, realizing what she was about to say.

"To hurt you like that" Yes. She had hurt Ruby. Hurt the most important person in her life. The one who had dragged her from a life of solitude and deception with little more than her bright smile, one that she could now only hope of ever seeing again.

Weiss was thoroughly crushed, having never realized the power that her actions had held. She had been all but ready to throw herself off of a cliff to apologize to Ruby. Never had she thought about if her precious partner would actually accept.

Never had she thought about the pain she had truly caused.

Weiss had Yang.

Weiss had Blake.

Weiss had Winter.

Weiss had everyone.

Ruby was _alone._

Why? Because her _best teammate _had left her. For what? A petty grudge?

Ruby could feel the tension in the air. She knew that her next words would decide how she would spend the rest of her life. Either alone, or with her friendsâ€¦ her family.

And yet, it was so much easier to stay away. These past two years had been numb, but they had never been as painful. Never as painful as that fateful night.

And so, she spoke.

"I can't Weiss." Her body moved forward as the words spilled out of her mouth, a faint wetness on her cheeks making itself known. "I'm scared to be hurt. To be cold."

And yet, the warmth of the woman in her arms was undeniable.

Weiss heard the words, felt her heart sink at the denialâ€¦ before finding comfort in the arms that now embraced her shoulders; she reciprocated.

"Then come _home_ Ruby." The words were slow, hesitant, like a child afraid of making a mistake. "I won't leave again, I-"

Her mind froze. It was just one word. One word that had caused them so much anguish that she dared not to speak it.

"Promise?" It wasn't Weiss that spoke. It was Ruby that whispered into her ear. The grip only became tighter.

Moments of silence followed before it was finally broken. "Yeahâ€¦" Her grip tightened, as if afraid Ruby would run away. "Promise."

Their faces flushed, and tears running freely, two women embraced one another among a field littered with the ebony corpses of Grimm.

-Break-

It would be several minutes before either woman was up to even moving, their soft sniffles echoing like a drum in the empty mountains around them.

"Rubyâ€¦?"

"Yeah Weiss?"

"I'm sor-" A finger held up to her face stopped the woman from finishing her sentence.

"Don't say anymore Weiss. I'll forgive you." Ruby's voice was flat, as if her forgiveness had been a forgone conclusion.

'_I haven't done anything to deserve someone like her in my life.'_ Weiss thought to herself. Never had she berated herself for the first impressions that she had of Ruby more. Unlucky? Being put on a team with the absolutely impossible girl in front of her had to be one of the most fortunate occurrences of her life!

"Then let me say this instead." With the two finally letting go of their embrace, Weiss pushed Ruby's finger down. "Thank you Ruby."

"Hey don't mention it, what are partners for?" This time, a real smile made it's way to Ruby's face; the large silver eyes once again filling with joy.

It was quite a while before Weiss would stop crying again, unable to believe that she deserved any of this.

End
file.